

LUTHERAN WOMAN TODAY

SEPTEMBER
1990

Rhythms of Life

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For Growth in Faith and Mission

Twenty-nine years ago, my mother had an inspiration: to gather together for a photograph "the four A's" in her family: my great-grandmother, Anna Wulfemeyer; my grandmother, Alice Rehm; my mother, Aleda Harrington; and me—then known (at age 16 months) as "Little Ann."

I treasure that snapshot. (It is the basis for the artwork on this month's cover.) I don't remember great-grandma, who was about 90 when the picture was taken and died a few years later. But in the photograph, in her spare, straight body and the stern set of her lips, I can see her story: crossing the plains from Missouri to Oregon in a covered wagon, wintering in a log cabin, working all her life on the farm.

Grandma, though 30 years younger, almost seems more frail: soft where her mother was strong, slowed by a hip broken in childhood, standing less than five feet tall. Mom is the perfect young wife, mother and homemaker, finding her way in a new town, 2000 miles from home.

I am now the age my mother was in that snapshot. People say I look

like she did. But there are no immediate plans for another "four A" photo. The rhythms of our lives are different. Grandma Rehm is in a nursing home; at 90, her always fragile body often verges on collapse. Mom and dad are preparing to leave Minnesota after 30 years. And I am working in the city, living on my own, listening for the rhythm God is beginning out for me to follow.

In Luke 1, the text for this month's Bible study, Mary hears the call through the angel Gabriel, to be part of God's plan of salvation for the world. And she says yes. She will find support for her acceptance of the call from her kinswoman Elizabeth, who has her own very special part to play.

Each of our roles, too, is important to God. Let all of us—mothers, daughters, sisters, grandmothers, aunts, nieces, cousins, kinswomen of Christ—listen carefully for the many beautiful rhythms being played out in our midst. Let us be gracious companions to one another, wherever our journeys lead us. ■

Ann Harrington

ON THE FRONT COVER: "Rhythms of Life," original drawing by Mary Groth, Aberdeen, S.D.

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◆◆ Letters to the editor

LWT

it to having been disappointed with the magazine . . . until April issue. Like the bud on the tree it seemed to open and bloom! Its meditation poem and deep-reaching articles fed my soul. Ever underlining thoughts to put in my retiree journal, nearly every page of LWT had "blooms to add to share."

*Elaine Boyle
Appleton, Wisconsin*

I sat down for morning devotions, tired and burned out from too many demands. LWT had articles in the April issue that ministered to me ("The Many Ways of Prayer," "Learning Silence," and "Getting Rid of Worry?") I am still hungry but also hungry for a closer relationship with God. The articles reminded me of the thorn bushes that have grown up to choke my walk with Christ. I have something to do!

*Becky Waddell
Annandale, Minnesota*

disappointed and alarmed that the *Easter* issue of LWT made very little mention of the theme of our renewal—the cross and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

*Sylvie N. Oines
Petersburg, Alaska*

greatly disturbed to read "How to Renewal?" and see the Holy Spirit referred to as *she*! How did we start giving the Holy

Spirit he or she characteristics? I believe God is above our trying to put him in a box so we can understand him.

*Justine Wahl
Clinton, Michigan*

Ruth

We have been waiting for you to get your act together, but the magazine is dull and the Bible study is even worse than the previous two years. It spends four months on the small book of Ruth and virtually becomes a gossip session on friends and neighbors.

I know what my obligations are to my neighbors, friends, the homeless, friendless and minorities, etc. The women of my church give their time, talents and money to help others in Christian love. We do not need to be reminded of all the misery in the world—we just want to study the word of God.

*Jean Ratel
Burlingame, California*

All the ladies of Hope Circle want to convey how much we have enjoyed the Bible study of Ruth. It has made for lots of discussion and we have been able to relax with it, really enjoy it and learn from it.

*Virginia Myers
Milbank, South Dakota*

Letters may be edited for clarity or brevity. Due to the volume of mail, letters to the editor do not receive personal replies. Send comments to: LWT Letters, 8765 W. Higgins Road, Chicago, IL 60631.

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the benefit of Women of the ELCA participants, articles relating to
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in, **g** = growth **c** = community. When more than one area is reflected
in an article, the primary focus is shown first.

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Rhythms of Aging

Kay Soder-Alderfer

Are you prepared to live to be 100? What seems preposterous to you or to me, seems reasonable to Dorothy Stein, director of gerological ministries in the Division for Social Ministry Organizations (DSMO) of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Life expectancy has increased to 75 years more for many North Americans and that will rise during the years ahead.

"The years from birth through 50 or 60 have been considered the productive years," Stein says. "Not enough people have looked at the years beyond 60 as years of fulfillment."

Stein points out that the years from birth to about 50 or 60 are very structured ones. "Throughout these times, we are often identified by our roles such as student, member, employee, wife, mother." After this time, Stein says, "many people go through exciting transformations of life, making more and more choices for their lives. Before, perhaps someone did something because he or she thought it was 'required' of them. In the years of fulfillment people weigh choices differently. They say, 'I'm not so sure I want to do this,' or 'I've always wanted to do that.'"

Appreciating the many and different rhythms of life is key. Stein affirms that "people need to find their own rhythm: the way of living that is best for them."

Life transitions are a natural part of life and aging. Stein looks at aging in terms of the whole person. "When people think of aging in society, they usually think first of physical changes in health. Certainly there are physical changes connected with aging, especially if one has a family history or personal predisposition toward certain realities. For most people, a change in eyesight



the first obvious signs of aging. Life-style and attitude have a lot to do with how we age.

We adapt and adjust all along the way. But life-style abuses age us significantly. Our diet, our exercise habits, how we use our time—all contribute to how we'll age."

The Dancers of the Third Age is an inter-generational modern dance company that has been providing participatory performances for 15 years.

When we associate aging with infirmities and the frail elderly, usually only five percent of elderly persons are frail elderly living in nursing homes. "Pastors or lay visitors may visit only the frail homebound and make the mistaken link between being frail and elderly," observes.

Ritual changes are also a part of the rhythm of life. Still a child of an elderly person continues to be in relationship to God. Elderly people appreciate worshiping with others, and offer meaningful witness as they share their faith stories. Church often serves as an "extended family" for the elderly. Stein urges all members of the church to seriously consider the needs and gifts of young persons in our congregations, as well as to examine our own ideas about aging.

R



Emotional and psychological health are also important concerns of aging. To face retirement and/or an empty nest presents new challenges to one's identity. This is where Stein feels the attitude of moving into years of fulfillment is crucial. "Moving toward this time of interdependence, not dependence, is a delicate transition."

People may contend with other issues during this transition. "Fear is a natural reaction during transition. People begin to fear being a burden to others and losing control. Rarely is death feared, but the fear of pain associated with dying may be present," Stein notes.

"Never have so many elderly lived so long," Stein says, "so we need to find creative outlets during our years of fulfillment." Planning second and even third careers, discovering one or more hobbies, volunteering and continuing education are some of the

Rhythms of Aging

Lesson

Chris Haala

ways in which people are enriching their later years.

Stein, who spent more than 20 years in volunteer positions for the Girl Scouts, observes that "People in years of fulfillment have the luxury of studying something just for the fun of it. It may be an avocation, but I also think we're going to see not only 40-year-olds studying for college degrees, but 60-year-olds and 80-year-olds going for master's degrees."

"Three things will become more and more important during the fulfillment years. First, the uniqueness of the individual. Second, rhythms and how they are influenced by temperament, societal roots, and spiritual understanding. Third, people welcoming these years as a time of choice."

Stein says we need to promote total life planning as a response to God's gracious gift of life. "It's not 'What will you do when you grow up?' Rather it's 'What will you do for the rest of your life?'" Then she adds with a smile: "Who and what will you be throughout your life?" ■



Sister Kay Soder-Alderfer is a deaconess of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and is editor of Entree, an ELCA campus ministry magazine. Independently, she also serves as a spiritual director in Downers Grove, Illinois.

Aging brought with it great benefit to me. I can appreciate the past, what I have now and yet look forward to the future. I approach anticipation the opportunities challenges God continues to offer.

Over the years, the support of parents, friends, teachers, my husband John, and our children and grandchildren has encouraged me and given me permission to accept challenges. At age 72 I actually find it easier to take risks—for even when the risk generates anxiety, it generates hope.

Looking back, I can see that my faith journey has contained dangerous curves, large boulders and washouts. Sometimes, John or one of my mentors within the church would smooth out the road and sometimes God would send some other crew to repair it.

You, the women of the church, are one such crew. Our women's organizations have led the way on social justice and peace issues while the church often lagged behind, joining in when the issue became popularly legitimatized by society. Here are a few of the "lessons" I've learned in 70-some years:

■ Prompted by the women's source material, I've explored

om the Other Side of 70

s. One program I facilitated 35 years ago changed my life in ways I did not have imagined. It examined the question, "who is my neighbor?" Later, as a Norwegian, Irish and Chinese daughters-in-law and a Black/white son-in-law joined our family, "my neighbor" took on real meaning, broadening my road for my faith journey.

As a Lutheran women's synod member 25 years ago I had the opportunity to hear Vine Deloria Jr., author of *Custer Died for Your Sins*. His book's story of a forgotten tribe in Louisiana was an indictment for all of us. Hearing of these profound injustices challenged my assumptions. I accepted responsibility to learn how we, working together, can make a difference.

My participation in social ministry education conferences through the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's Division for Congregational Life has been a more liberating experience. These annual conferences have empowered



Writer Chris Haaland, left, visited Dorothy Stein recently in Stein's Lutheran Center office. (See "Rhythms of Aging," p. 4, for an interview with Stein.)

me to be a servant in this time and this place.

At the conferences, as we worshiped and shared life experiences as a diverse audience, we listened to farmers who feared losing—or who already had lost—their vocation, land and homes handed down from generations. We heard from gays and lesbians of the rejection they experience and of their longing to remain in the faith community as children of God. We learned from refugees fearing for their lives as they fled their homeland. And we listened to a pastor with multiple sclerosis whose church said his ministry was over.

I wept often as I walked with them in their hurt and suffering. Briefly I wondered where the grace of God was. I knew it was there, but some-

Lessons . . .

how many have been made to feel outside of God's grace.

■ Years ago a Thanksgiving project in our congregation helped us begin a friendship with a Hispanic mother who lived in a four-room house with no plumbing. As I watched my new friend struggle to feed and clothe her 11 children, I knew she must often have had little hope for her family's future.

I still recall a Christmas celebration our two families shared. Nine-year-old Juan, delighted with a radio we gave him, asked if I still had the receipt. He was concerned that if a policeman stopped him he would be questioned about its ownership—a common practice in the area where he lived. My children never had to face that humiliation.

All these experiences have strengthened my resolve to advocate for the oppressed, to work for changing those systems that create suffering. Advocacy is not often popular. When traditional viewpoints are threatened by change, a sense of loss occurs. But my resolve is renewed as I remember the biblical mandate to work toward a just and sustainable society.

When I've become frustrated because of needs unmet or issues unaddressed, I've asked, "Where is the church?" The answer comes back to me, "Where were you? You, too, are



As God empowers us, in an ever-widening circle of people, we become connected as we serve together.

the church." Then I thank God for the opportunities the church provided me, helping me to understand the broad spectrum of ministry. As God empowers us, in an ever-widening circle of people of all ages, cultures and life-styles, we become connected as we serve together.

For each day God gives us, we rejoice. Each day is a chance to rectify yesterday and plan tomorrow. To be open-minded, to understand each other and to embrace each other.

Chris Haaland is senior staff coordinator of the Rocky Mountain Synod, a member of the ELCA Division for Social Ministry Organization (DSMO) consulting committee on aging and a supporter of social ministries. She is a member of St. Paul Lutheran, Albuquerque, New Mexico.



Two R's: *Reading and Relationships*

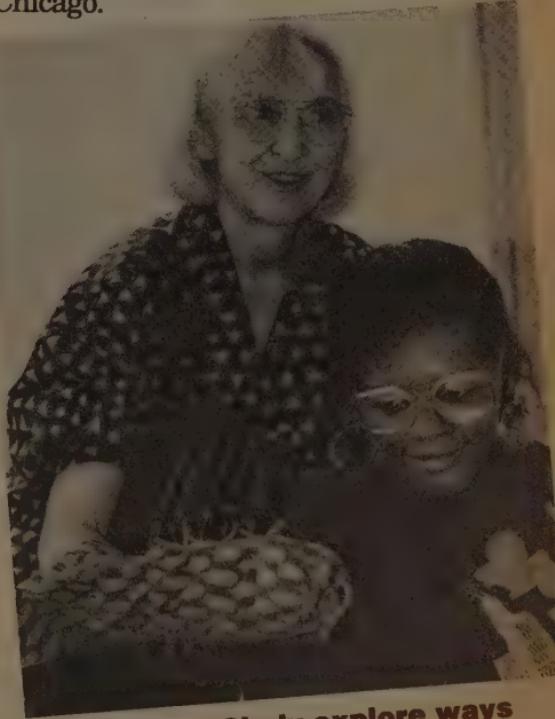
Bobbie Krueger

s came into her eyes as Sandy held at the envelope in her hands. She had just finished addressing it in her slow, careful script. "This is the letter I've ever written," she said. Sandy has an aunt who writes her frequently, but until now she, who is in her mid-20s, never had the tools to respond. After nine weeks with her tutor (an elementary school teacher on summer vacation) the goal of constructing a letter to Sandy's aunt was met. At the same time a whole new world was opening up for Sandy: the world of reading.

Wally had never spent much time with his children; he let his wife do "bringin' up." Now that he and daughter Anna go to "school" together, he says a special bond is forming between them. These days Wally even gives up shopping with his mother to stay home and do "homework" with her daddy. Likewise, Wally's program attendance is excellent because Anna pushes him to come.

Sandy, Wally and Anna are participants in *Reach Out And Read* (ROAR), a church-based family literacy program at Augustana Lutheran Church in Hyde Park, Chicago. ROAR had its beginnings at a church stewardship cottage meeting during which Augustana members assessed a need for a local outreach program in which they could get involved. A member who had been reading family literacy suggested

Augustana try starting such a program, and the idea was greeted enthusiastically. The ROAR program recently received a vote of confidence: a grant from the Wheat Ridge Foundation, a Lutheran-related charitable organization based in Chicago.



Larayne and Cindy explore ways a puppet can be used to teach pre-reading skills.

Hyde Park is a racially and economically mixed community surrounded by areas of great poverty. Most residents in the nearby neighborhoods have not or will not graduate from high school, and at least

one-fourth of them are considered functionally illiterate. Unfortunately, this phenomenon extends far beyond the Hyde Park area. According to the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy, "Tens of millions of America's citizens have serious basic skills deficiencies."



Larayne, parent-as-teacher coordinator, demonstrates the children's "job board" used in the nursery.

Parents are the first and most important teachers of a child. Therefore, the educational level of a child's parents, especially the mother, is the single most important predictor of how well a child will do in school—even ahead of economic level and other factors, according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, 1985.

When parents and children learn together, several wonderful things happen. Parents' reading skills improve, and their motivation to learn is high. The children also learn skills,

and—even more important—they learn that reading is a valued and enjoyable activity. The self-esteem of parents improves, because they know they are giving a vital gift to their children. The special attention of being read to helps raise children's self-esteem as well.

For all these reasons, many people believe that intergenerational programs hold the most hope for breaking the cycle of illiteracy and preventing it from being passed from one generation to the next.

ROAR's family literacy program has three parts. First, parents meet with tutors, one-on-one, to work on their own individualized goals and needs. Second, the parents' preschool children are cared for in the nursery while the parents study. Children's volunteers also attend the nursery, allowing more people to get involved. The nursery curriculum is designed

Kathryn, a volunteer in ROAR's nursery, leads story time.





Bobbie Krueger, writer of this article,
her children Alexandra
Timothy enjoy the
every.

oster the development of such reading concepts as categorization, rhyming, sequence, and observation.

Third, the intergenerational committee making this a *family literacy* program is dubbed "Parents As Teachers." It is composed of a variety of activities that provide ideas and experiences parents can use to be teachers of their children and encourage reading as a daily event. The intergenerational activities include a weekly discussion group, family parent-child group time, field trips, guest speakers, a lending library and take-home projects.

Members of Augustana Lutheran, especially women, have found many opportunities for involvement. Some others help in the nursery. Two others volunteer as door monitors, maintaining security, taking attendance and disseminating information. One couple manages the

library. Several members serve on the governing committee of ROAR. Still others are involved in fund-raising, publicity and outreach, curriculum design, and special events.

Augustana's pastor, the Rev. Lawrence Hamilton, says, "My understanding of social ministry is one of mutuality, in which both the tutors and the students are giving and receiving, and in which the building of relationships enriches and blesses both of them."

Reading is a gift, and those of us who have it have a responsibility to share this gift with those who need it. ■

Bobbie Krueger, Chicago, Illinois, is director of the ROAR program. Dr. Krueger, who holds a Ph.D. in linguistics, says her two preschool-age children have taught her the love of reading to children.

What About You?

If you are interested in volunteering for a literacy program in your area, call the national referral hotline, 800-228-8813.

If you are interested in finding out how to start a family literacy program in your church, contact Faith Fretheim, Director for Literacy, Women of the ELCA, 800-638-3522, ext. 2736.

For more information about ROAR, call Bobbie Krueger, 312-363-2525. ■

Hidden colors

**Kathleen J.
Bowers**

My childhood home of Liberia is a country of colors—a land of the natural earth. As the child of missionary parents I spent my first eight years in West Africa, except for two brief home-leaves to the United States.

It was not until the day my family left Liberia for good that I began to recognize the unique beauties of both countries. In Liberia I did not have the everyday luxuries, such as telephones or grocery stores, that North Americans cannot live without, but I did not know them and so did not miss them. I did know, and now appreciate, the glorious natural life of Liberia which North Americans cannot imagine.

Living in Liberia, I saw the growing fields of emerald green rice, deep green jungles, pale brown dirt roads, dark mud huts and darker people. After eight years, even my pale skin took on an African bushland tan. The Liberian air is clear, the sky bright blue, and the sunsets ever-changing waves of scarlet, orange, violet. Liberian bananas proudly show their intense, ripe yellow, and the hibiscus comes in a variety of warm reds and pinks. Even the people of Liberia shine next to my family of pastel North Americans, their dark skin set off by richly colorful clothes and bright designs and patterns.

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On the evening before my family's final departure we stepped into our familiar dirt- and rust-stained bathtub, put the yellow rubber plug in the drain, and turned on the water. I watched as the water level slowly rose. I watched for the tadpoles that occasionally got into the pipe from the pond. As the water reached a depth of a few inches it became less transparent, more the color of the dirt roads. I turned it off and waited for mom to bring a pot of boiling water from the kitchen to warm the bath.

As I sat in the bathtub, I thought back to my most recent visit to the United States, a winter spent in central Michigan when I was in kindergarten. I could see myself walking to school with my sister. The ground, bushes, trees and sidewalks were covered with white snow and slush. The street was a salty gray, the sky steel blue. I also remembered the school's gym—a large, hollow, cement-floored room where we played games with an old worn-out, blue-gray parachute. But in the last-minute act

I wonder of leaving my Liberian home forever, even these ages were dim.

After a long, exhausting trip, my family arrived in New York City. We made it through the dark, dingy streets to the hotel, and my parents immediately began to get ready for bed. I was too excited. I was fascinated by the exotic setting in the hotel, especially in the bathroom where a whole row of light bulbs lit up a huge, perfect mirror.

Not one spot of rust came through that mirror, not even on the corners. I could see a clear reflection of myself, and stood on my toes to see more over the edge of the sink. The sink itself was one smooth, uninterrupted sheet of white. The bathtub was just as stunning. It took the entire width of the bathroom—probably long enough for even me to lie down in.

When I turned one of the handles, a torrent of water gushed out so hard and fast that I felt a few drops splash back on my arm. And then I saw that this was ordinary water! It was lighted, clear, gloriously beautiful. I quickly put the plug in so as not to waste any more of it, then sat by the edge and watched. As it got deeper and deeper it became even more beautiful, because I could see the way to the bottom. It shone and sparkled everywhere, in every dip between the waves. It was light and transparent and perfectly clear all at once. I had never seen such exquisite perfection in all my life. I touched it and knew it must be smoother than any water I had ever had. I splashed it and watched each drop burst with light. I stood in amazement, transfixed by this new beauty—the dazzling spectacle of the absence of color.

Like many other people, I have often wondered what heaven is like, or even if it exists as a physical place. I have heard that the streets are paved with gold, the most precious metal on earth. I believe God has something better, something like clean water and light to a Liberian, or burst of tropical colors to a North American—new colors, a new light beyond my finite imagination. ■

Leen Bowers is a senior at Ursinus College in Collegeville, Pennsylvania, majoring in English.



The writer as a child (age 3½) with her chimpanzee, Zero.



SAFETY ON CAMPUS

Diane Minor



Every fall young women and men head off to colleges and universities in search of learning, new experiences and a taste of independence.

Unfortunately, some will encounter an unpleasant new experience: they will become victims of crime.

"A high percentage of our students are from rural backgrounds, and walking across town in West Overhoe, Minnesota, is nothing like walking across the campus at the University of Minnesota-Minneapolis," said Jerie Smith, a Lutheran campus ministry staff person there.

Just how many students become victims of serious crimes is difficult to determine. Most colleges and universities have not been required to report crime on campus to state or federal law-enforcement agencies.

Now new laws in some states require colleges to report crime statistics to these agencies and to prospective students. The laws also require campus crime-prevention programs.

Statistics suggest a typical campus annually reports hundreds of cases of burglary and assault, a dozen or more armed robberies and rapes and, perhaps, a homicide.

Rape an increasing concern

Because rape is considered one of the most underreported of all crimes, administrators are especially concerned about the increasing number of students seeking help from counseling and health service staff following incidents of sexual assault. It is not clear what these increasing numbers mean. Jerie Smith, of the



Rape is considered the most underreported of all crimes.

an campus ministry staff, says, wrestle with this question all the time: Is it [sexual assault] happening more, or are we hearing more about it because people feel safer to report it?" On many campuses, rape—by strangers and by assailants known by the victim—is surpassing theft as the primary security concern. In response, colleges are adding security staff, improving campus and lighting, providing escort services and conducting educational campaigns.

Sherie Smith provided student counseling on sexual abuse issues at the university's own counseling center was flooded with requests for such services.

According to a landmark, three-year study of 6,100 students funded by the National Institute on Mental Health, one in four female college students said they had experienced sexual assault or rape. The average age at the time of the attack? 18. Most students said they knew their attackers, but few of them reported incidents to authorities.

"I think there's still a widespread belief in the myth that when a woman says no she means yes," said Dean Marie Anderson of Susquehanna University (Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania), an institution of the Evan-

gelical Lutheran Church in America. "Many young women are still not assertive and many young men do not see it [forced sex] as assault."

drinking a factor

Another factor that contributes to campus sexual assault is binge drinking, which government statistics suggest is as common as ever. With the drinking age raised to 21 in most states, most illegal drinking occurs in dorm rooms and at off-campus parties.

Some administrators believe these new drinking and socializing behaviors combined with old attitudes put today's students at increased risk for sexual assault and other violent crimes.

What can concerned parents, students and others do?

1. Study crime reports.

To determine just how vulnerable students will be to rape and other serious crimes on campus, some parents and prospective students send colleges a questionnaire about crime statistics and prevention programs. The colleges' responses, however, may be a challenge to compare.

"Tallies on homicides and rapes



These issues are not for women only.

don't fit a college in a rural setting like ours," said Penni Johnson, dean of students at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minnesota, a college of the ELCA. "So we've put together a letter we hope is responsive to the valid issues raised."

Pennsylvania colleges have been required to report crime statistics to state authorities for several years now, based on a new law backed by the parents of a Lehigh University student who was raped, robbed and murdered in her dorm room.

Yet a dean at Gettysburg College in Pennsylvania, a college of the ELCA, fears the new law may make students less willing to report a crime—particularly a sensitive one such as rape by a fellow student—because they fear campus security officials will want them to press charges.

2. Look for educational efforts.

"All our colleges are making more and more of an effort to talk with students about security issues, about the effects of alcohol and about how accepting sexual stereotypes can lead to rape if you think no doesn't mean no," said Dean Johnson of Gustavus Adolphus.

Colleges are presenting videotapes, skits and discussions to first-year students, small groups in resi-

dence halls and targeted audience

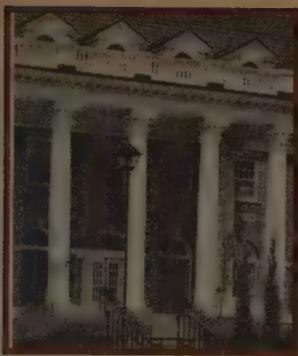
Football players at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, a college of the ELCA, recently watched a videotape on sexual assault awareness. Jim Wettach, a track and football coach at Luther, said: "I think it'll make a lot of young men think twice and use some more self-control, and that's what we should."

3. Connect to an adult presence. Wettach and two female professors at Luther agreed to serve as volunteer contacts for victims of sexual assault and to help spread the message that these issues are not for women only.

Faculty at all 29 colleges of the ELCA and some 745 Lutheran campus ministry contacts at public universities provide a similar "adult presence." That's a crucial missing element at most campuses these days, according to a recent survey of 500 college presidents.

"A faculty or staff person around keeps behavior from getting too wild," said Dottie Anderson, dean of students at Susquehanna.

"We don't tell students we're doing it, but we do try to model adult friendships," said Barb Fritsch, with Lutheran campus ministry at the University of Iowa, Iowa City. [Single copies of a poster that gives



Campus violence raises many issues and challenges with no quick fix.

ne numbers and addresses of Lutheran campus staff churchwide is available from the ELCA's Resource Information Service at 800-638-2.]

Revise the rules.

Many colleges are revising their policies and procedures to make them more sensitive to victims of rape by own assailants (often called "date rape" or "acquaintance rape"). Some are revising student conduct codes to make more direct statements against unwanted and forced sexual conduct. "We want to make sure we're all delivering the message that forcing someone to have sex is rape," said Dean Anderson.

Because both criminal and campus procedures have been weighted in favor of the accused, some colleges are also revising their procedures to give victims equal rights to legal representation, the choice of peer or administrative review of their cases and the option of new housing arrangements.

Administrators struggle over how to add new options, deliver the message that rape is a serious crime, and protect the rights of the accused.

Prepare the students.

Campus safety begins before students set foot on campus. High

school students should be informed about the relationship between drinking and sexual violence. Skills to resist peer pressures can be reinforced, allowing students to say, hear, and respect a no answer.

Campus violence raises many issues and challenges with no quick fix. One campus minister ruefully described that challenge a week after a Lutheran graduate student was sexually assaulted on a city bus while riding home from a campus-ministry potluck.

"Here we sit, trying to classically communicate the gospel that says, 'Be open, be caring, be forgiving,'" said the Rev. Cyndi Ganskow-Wold, a campus minister at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. "We also have to add, 'But if you're a woman, be careful.' It's a very difficult message to proclaim." ■

Diane Minor, a member of Christ the King Lutheran Church in Chicago, is associate director of interpretation for the ELCA Commission for Communication. She previously worked as a journalist in Madison, Wisconsin, and Fargo-Moorhead.



Your Community & Older People

Linda Freeman

We are all aging. As we—and our population in general—grow older, more and more interest is being paid to how our communities are being responsive to the needs of its older citizens.

Communities meeting needs

In 1988, the United States Administration on Aging honored 13 community efforts. The communities represented are diverse—large and small, urban and rural. Their approaches are tailored to local needs, resources and opportunities. But all share vision, leadership and a commitment to making their community a good place for older people to live. Some examples:

■ A large number of older people live in the outlying areas of Lee County, Florida, while senior services are concentrated in greater Fort Myers. In the past this situation made it difficult for many to take advantage of the services and benefits available to them. In 1985, a consortium of over 100 agencies, organizations, business and service providers

in the area implemented a program called *Age Link*, a coordinating information and referral service. A central location and one telephone number connect senior citizens to all the cooperating services and agencies.

■ The Stephenson County (Illinois) Senior Center shows what can happen when public and private sectors work together. In the early 1970s the Northwestern Illinois Area Agency on Aging and a study group of the Episcopal church assessed the needs of senior citizens and in 1973 the first senior center began operation in the basement of a Methodist church. With a budget of \$20,000 it provided information and referral, outreach and transportation services. Today, the center located in a renovated school building and has a budget of \$234,000.

■ In Hamilton County, Tennessee, the Interfaith Elderly Assistance Program reduces loneliness and isolation by matching volunteers from various congregations throughout the county with older individuals to provide friendly visiting, telephone reassurance, and support for widowed persons.

Community efforts are tailored to local needs, resources and opportunities.

How is your community doing?

The U.S. Administration on Aging developed the following 10-point checklist.* How does your community measure up?

Does your community have a **visible point of contact** where anyone can go or call for help, information or referral on any aging issue?

Does this point of contact lead to **range of options** on a continuum of care including jobs, leisure activities, volunteer opportunities, suitable housing, in-home services, transportation, quality institutional care and other options?

Is this range of options **accessible** to all older persons—the independent, semi-independent and totally dependent—no matter what their income?

Are all **resources**—public, private, voluntary and personal—committed to supporting the system of options for older people?

Does **collaborative decision-making** between public, private, voluntary, religious and fraternal organizations and older people exist in your community? Are all those concerned with older people working together in your community?

6) Is there **special help or targeted resources** for the most vulnerable older people, those most in danger of losing their independence?

7) Is there **good referral** from agency to agency to assure that information or assistance is received, no matter how or where contact is made in the community?

8) Is the system in your community **flexible** enough to respond with appropriate individualized assistance, especially for the vulnerable older person?

9) Are efforts for the aging tailored to the **unique nature** of your community?

10) Is there **leadership** in the community to convene all interested persons, assess needs, design solutions, track overall success, stimulate change and plan community responses today and in the future?

Every community, including the faith community, needs to make certain there is a broad range of opportunities available—both to serve and to tap the skills and talents of this segment of our population.

For more information or assistance contact: The U.S. Administration on Aging, 330 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, DC 20201; phone 202-245-0641. ■

Linda Freeman, Charlotte, North Carolina, is resource secretary for United Ministries in Higher Education, a national ecumenical organization relating primarily to campus pastors.

From the brochure *Make Your Community Work for Older People* copyright © 1987 U.S. Administration on Aging. Used by permission.

Nursing Home

A SHORT STORY

Esther M. Hinz

Upon returning to my home congregation, I found myself part of a special group. Every Monday joy filled my heart as I joined Ruby, Anna, Elizabeth, Taressa, Thelma, Rose, and Pansey at the church.

We prayed aloud in the group, often for church family members. That was hard for some, but we encouraged one another to write out our prayers or read one, so that we could hear one another's voices and feel the Spirit making us one at the throne of grace. Of course, we read God's Word and discussed it with the aid of helpful resources and an ever-present pot of coffee.

A Discussion

The members of our prayer group became as close as sisters, discussing whatever was on our minds. One day, I brought up the subject of nursing homes. "When should one consider going to a nursing home?" I asked.

Ruby said she would not go unless it was absolutely necessary. Taressa didn't think she'd have to even think about it for several years. The group seemed surprised that my husband and I had discussed the possibility already.

"We've decided that in case of illness we would both go to a nursing home, even before it was absolutely necessary," I told the group. "We can get used to a different kind of living then before someone else needs to make up our minds for us."

Ruby shook her head, saying, "That sounds fine for you, but I'd go only if there was no other choice." The other women agreed with her and so ended the discussion.

Reality

Not so many years later, it became harder and harder for me to get around because of rheumatoid arthritis. I could still drive, but walking up or down steps was impossible. Clarence, my husband, had health problems also, but he still tried to rake, mow the lawn, and haul the water hoses around to and from the church, where he did custodial work. Finally, after his third trip to the hospital, the doctor recommended the nursing home for Clarence.



Reality was upon us! And what a blessing that we had discussed it. Still, it was hard for Clarence. Even though he had agreed before, now he didn't want to go. I told him that I was coming too—for the whirlpools and therapy, and most of all for his company.

Growing

At first we were depressed by our surroundings. We nearly surrendered to this depression before we looked around and saw that others were also in pain or were lonely. They needed our prayers. Both Clarence and I concentrated on practicing the fruits of the Spirit mentioned in Galatians 5:22-23.

And many of the other residents helped us. Kenny taught me how to get into bed using the back rail. Emmy taught me not to be afraid to witness to others in my own way and to let the Holy Spirit lead me.

Patience is one fruit of the Spirit that gets tried to its full length here. Some residents don't realize how their voices carry, or how loud the TV can get, and often one's patience is tested. The fruits of the Spirit become an everyday tool for our big family in our new home.

The Jordan River

Many residents at the nursing home have walked or even run through the forest to the river Jordan and found Jesus waiting for them. When it came time for my husband to go, it took all my faith to help him on the final journey. But Clarence and I will meet again.

Those who live in this home, this nursing home, and those who work here with such genuine love, are a comfort and a blessing to me. Together we sustain each other in life and faith. ■

Esther Hinz of Culbertson, Montana, is the mother of one and grandmother of five. She lives in a nursing home.

Companions on
Your Journey:
Studies of
Biblical Women



Introduction: Part III

Bethlehem Revisited

Mary, the mother of Jesus, is the companion with whom we travel in this last part of our journey. We will see how she is a companion of God, as she agrees to participate in a very special way in the plan of salvation. We will see how other companions—especially her kinswoman Elizabeth—assist her on her journey. And we will explore how she is our companion today—a woman like us, and an example of discipleship.

We end the Bible study where we began—in Bethlehem, the house of bread. But this time there is not famine, but rather a rich feast of God's goodness extended to all through the Bread of Life, Mary's son Jesus.

We hope you enjoy this last leg of our journey together. May you be nourished, and may God's steadfast love be a constant companion—for you and for those who travel and share bread with you.

*E. Louise Williams
Phyllis N. Kersten
Bible study writers*

Mary: God's Companion and Ours

Study Text: Luke 1:26-38

E. Louise Williams & Phyllis N. Kersten



She was not part of the "jet set" of her time, this maiden named Mary.

She lived in a small, backwater town called Nazareth. As someone once said, "What good can come out of Nazareth?"

And she is virtually a child when she is first mentioned in Luke—probably no more than 13 years old—for that's the age when betrothal generally took place.

To this young woman came God's messenger, Gabriel, with words which would change the world.

"Quite possibly," Luther says, "Mary was doing the house-work when the Angel Gabriel came to her." For angels "prefer to come to people as they are fulfilling their calling." Or, Luther suggests, Mary might have been "praying for the redemption of Israel"—since "angels are wont to appear" during prayer.

From *The Martin Luther Christmas Book*, translated and arranged by Roland H. Bainton (Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1948).

We, of course, have no way of knowing, but where do you imagine that Mary was when God spoke to her through Gabriel? Where do you most experience God speaking to you? In the middle of your daily activities? Through prayer? Or in some other way, such as through other people?

JOURNEYING THROUGH THE WORD

Read through this session's study text, Luke 1:26-38.



The appearance of the angel

Gabriel is God's messenger to Mary, as he had been to Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist (Luke 1:19). Gabriel comes to Mary in the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy (see Luke 1:24 and 36).

Fear and reassurance

In most of the other birth announcements in Scripture, there is a reaction of fear to the appearance of the angel.

2

But what troubles or upsets Mary in verses 28-29?



■ The meaning of the angel's greeting to Mary has been an issue through the centuries. Traditionally, the Roman Catholic church has interpreted the angel's greeting as meaning that Mary was filled with grace of her own, which she could then dispense to others. From that understanding, other doctrines about Mary followed: that believers could pray to Mary and she would help them, that she was without sin, that she was the *co-redemptrix* (or co-redeemer) along with Jesus, and so forth. Donald G. Miller points out, however, in the section on Luke in the *Layman's Bible Commentary*, that in the one other place in the New Testament where the word translated as "favored one" is used, it "means clearly grace *bestowed* on someone." Today most scholars—Roman Catholic and Protestant—would agree with Miller that Mary "was favored not because of what she was in herself, but because the Lord was with her" (verse 28), and because she had "found favor with God" (verse 30). She was not 'mother of grace,' but 'daughter of grace.' She was full of grace which she had received, not full of grace which she had to bestow."

From *The Layman's Bible Commentary: The Gospel According to Luke* (Vol. 18) by Donald G. Miller (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1955).

3

Like Mary, you too could be called a "daughter of grace," because the Lord has bestowed favor on you. How could thinking of yourself as a daughter of grace influence your attitude or behavior toward others around you? Toward yourself?

The angel reassures Mary in three different ways in verses 28-30: 1) by telling her that the Lord was with her; 2) by telling her not to be afraid; and 3) by calling her by name.

Are there situations in your life right now where knowing that the Lord is with you and that God calls by name helps you not to be afraid?



The birth announcement

In verse 31, Mary is told that she has been chosen to bear a son, and that his name will be Jesus. The reason for naming him Jesus is given by the angel to Joseph in Matthew 1:21 ("for he shall save his people from their sins"), but it is not mentioned by Luke. But the description of Mary's son in Luke 1:32-33 makes clear that this child is the long-awaited Messiah.

What similarities do you see between Nathan's depiction of the Messiah to David in 2 Samuel 7:12-17 and the angel's description of Jesus? What echoes of the description in Isaiah 9:6-7 do you hear?

■ Luke reports the prophesies that John the Baptist will be "great before the Lord" (Luke 1:15) and "the prophet of the Most High" (1:76). But verse 32 reveals that Mary's son will be greater still: "the Son of the Most High." Jesus is God's own Son. His reign on the throne of David will be "for ever" and his Kingdom will have "no end."

Kingdoms end in this world. Berlin walls and Iron curtains come tumbling down. Governments are overthrown. Financial empires topple. Politicians resign from office in disgrace. Marriages fail. Jobs are eliminated. Good ones die. How is the message that in Jesus' kingdom "there will be no end" reassuring to you?

Mary's question: how can this be?



Mary asks, in verse 34, "How can this be, since I have husband?" This could be interpreted as, "How can I conceive since I am not yet living with my husband, Joseph; and still a virgin." Raymond Brown in *The Birth of the Messiah* writes that the Jewish matrimonial procedure "consisted of two steps: a formal exchange of consent before witnesses (Machi 2:14) and the subsequent taking of the bride to the groom's family home (Matthew 25:1-13)." Usually, a girl entered into the age of consent at 12 or 13 years of age, and continued to live in her parents' home for about a year.

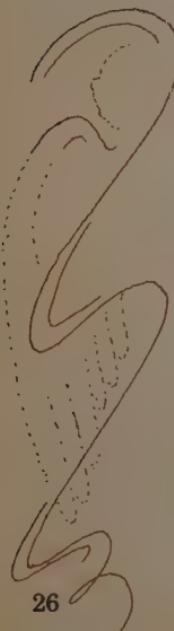
From *The Birth of the Messiah: A Commentary on the Infancy Narratives in Matthew and Luke* by Raymond E. Brown (New York: Doubleday, 1977).

Most students of the Bible believe that the concept of virgin birth is not as important for what it tells us about Mary (her virginity), as for what it tells us about Jesus—that he was truly the Son of God who came into the world through God's own activity, not ours.

7

Mary asked, "How can this be?" Do you ever ask that question when considering your part in God's plan of salvation? Do you follow the question with "I am too young"? Or "I am too old"? Or, "I'm a widow. I have young children. I have a family and a full-time career outside the home. I'm unsure of my faith. I have no talent. I don't have much education. I am too poor"? What do you say to the question "How can this be?"

The angel's response: how it can be

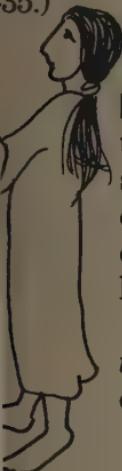


Gabriel's answer to Mary comes in three parts. The first is in verse 35, where the angel, in a sense, replies, "How can this be? I can't really say—the conception of Jesus is a mystery. I can only tell you that it will be through the creative power of the Holy Spirit, who will overshadow you, and that your son will be called holy, the Son of God."

Gabriel's answer is not a physical explanation. It's a description of the mystery of the Holy Spirit's ongoing activity to let us know about God's loving purposes for people on earth. This is the same Spirit of God who, in creation, "was moving over the face of the waters" (Genesis 1:2), and who led the children of Israel by a "pillar of cloud" by day and a "pillar of fire" by night (Exodus 13:21). This same spirit overshadows Mary, so that

brings us Jesus—the new creation, the new Adam—creating the new Israel, the church.

In what other major events in Jesus' life are we minded of Luke 1, verse 35—of the presence, or “over-owing” of the Holy Spirit; and of testimony to Jesus the Son of God? (See Matthew 3:13-17 and Luke 3:15.)



■ In Luke 1, verses 36-37, Gabriel responds to Mary's question of “How can this be?” in two more ways. The angel's answer in verse 36 might be paraphrased, “*How can this be?* I can't really say—but I can give you a sign to strengthen and encourage you: your barren relative Elizabeth is pregnant in her old age!”

In verse 37, the angel responds with reassurance, “*How can this be?* I can't really say—I can only give you a word to depend on: with God, nothing is impossible.”

Mary is given a companion, Elizabeth, and a promise to depend on. Whom has God given you in your life to sign, or for strength and encouragement? What companions or confidants have helped you in a time of fear and uncertainty? Who has helped you believe that with nothing is impossible?

y's response: let it be

Read Genesis 18:9-15. How is Sarah's situation similar to Mary's? How does Sarah respond? Is there a promise in this passage that reminds you of the angel's promise to Mary, “For with God nothing will be impossible”? What is Mary's remarkable response to the angel in Luke 1:38?

■ The word *handmaid* is the feminine form of *doulos*, or “servant.” It also appears in the Pentecost story in Acts 2:18,

the prophecy from Joel quoted by Peter: ". . . yea, and our menservants and my maidservants in those days I will pour out my Spirit. . . ."

We sometimes think that the shepherds were the first to hear the gospel—the good news of the birth of a Savior. Luke 1:38 suggests that a simple small-town girl—a young teenager named Mary—was really the first to hear and believe the good news that God's own Son, Jesus, was coming into the world.

God's companion—and ours

■ For the first months and years of Jesus' life, Mary was his closest human companion. Like any human baby, Jesus was fed and nourished in his mother's womb. Did Mary experience morning sickness? Backache? Swollen feet? Are the physical aspects of being Jesus' mother what gives Mary her significance in Luke's gospel? A woman in a crowd suggests to Jesus, "Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts that you sucked!"

But Jesus responds, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!" And in Luke 8:19-21, Jesus describes in a similar way what it really means to be related to him: "Whoever hears the word of God and does it, he may be his disciple: 'My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it.'

Under this definition, Mary, Jesus' biological mother, is Jesus' first disciple. For in the Annunciation, she listens and accepts God's message, saying "Let it be unto me, according to your word" (Luke 1:38).

Mary is a model to the church—not because she fully understood the mission of her son, but rather because she responded in faith to God's call to be part of the unfolding drama of salvation.

■ In a sermon on the Annunciation, Martin Luther suggested that there are three miracles in the Christmas story: that God and man should be joined in this Child; that a woman should remain a virgin; that Mary should have such faith to believe that this mystery would be accomplished in her. The last miracle, according to Luther, "is not the least of the three. The Virgin birth is a mere trifle for God; that God should become man is a greater miracle; but most amazing of all is that Mary would believe 'the announcement that she had been chosen to be the mother of God'" (*The Martin Luther Christmas Book*, pp. 22-23).



In what kinds of situations in your life might God call you, like Mary, to respond in faith, "Let it be according to your word"?



COMPANIONS IN DEED

With the eyes of faith, we know Mary as the mother of Jesus and faithful first disciple. In the eyes of the world, however, Mary would perhaps have been seen only as a pregnant teenager, an unwed mother. The Bible study resource book (pages 83-85) contains information on teenage pregnancy and infant mortality in the United States and suggests possible ways in which women of faith can make a difference for women and children with special needs. Your group might respond to one of these needs as the Lord's servants today.

COMPANIONS IN PRAYER AND PRAISE

In closing, you might want to sing or say together *Lutheran Book of Worship* 86, "The Only Son from Heaven." It is written by a woman, Elizabeth Meseritz Cruciger, who lived from 1500-1535. You can find more information on her in the Bible study resource book (page 84).

Other options: sing or say together stanzas 2 and 3 of *LBW* 42, "Of the Father's Love Begotten." Or, have a soloist sing verses 1-3,5 of *LBW* 64, "From East to West" as your group ponders this mystery of God's love.

JOURNEYING ON

As we continue our faith journey with Mary, you might want to learn more about how women of other denominations or cultures view Mary. Some material on this is given on pages 80-81 of the Bible study resource book. You might also want to seek out people who are Roman Catholic or of other faiths, and ask them how they view Mary. Be sure also to read Luke 1:39-45, the account of Mary's visit with Elizabeth, our study text for the next session. ■

Three generations, one family.

Inez Schwarzkopf

*Cora
Martinson*



By 1941, when the attack on Pearl Harbor brought World War II to America's doorstep, Cora Martinson had already lived through five grueling years of war. The Japanese had invaded China early in 1937. But after Pearl Harbor, she and her brother left Hunan province, with only a wheelbarrow and a bicycle for transportation.

Thus ended Cora's second sojourn in China. The child of missionary parents, she first came to China as an infant. She grew up there, attending missionary schools through high school. Her father died young and her mother kept dairy cows and boarded friends and relatives in their home in order to stay and carry on the missionary work.

When Cora and her brother and sister were old enough for college, the family returned to the United States, where Cora earned a teaching degree from St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota.

She taught high school and college in Minnesota, Wisconsin and Alberta, Canada. During World War II, she served as Dean of Women at

Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota.

"I never particularly wanted to go back to China," she says. "I loved people, but the climate was so difficult for me!"

But God had other plans for her. "I knew I had an unusual skill in knowing the Chinese language. I wondered how I was supposed to use it. I got one request to teach at a missionary school in China. But I wouldn't have used the language if I turned it down. But I made a decision that the next unsolicited letter I'd go."

The next request was to teach at a Chinese high school. Cora half-hoped until the ship sailed that God might only be testing her willingness, and might release her from the call.

"But I've never regretted it," she says. She returned to China in 1946 and stayed until 1949 when the Communist victory forced Chinese workers out. She moved to Hong Kong where she continued to teach her beloved Chinese students for many years.

ow retired, Cora Martinson es letter-writing her first prior-averaging 23 letters a month to friends. She also keeps in touch young people, teaching at a Ne-ka Bible camp each summer and ing neighborhood children and at a restaurant around the cor-rom her home in St. Paul. "It's important to pay attention to ren," she says.

Ida Marie Martinson

Marie Martinson is married to s nephew, Paul. They met over nese meal. "I had spent one col-summer in Japan," she explains, on the way home, in Hong , I met Paul's missionary par-Then back at the University of esota that fall, I met Paul gh a mutual friend."

hen we got married, he never l if I could cook, or any of the ional questions," she laughs. ust asked if I was willing to Chinese." She was.

ir marriage is unusual. Paul is e faculty of Luther Northwest- eminary in St. Paul. And Ida , with a doctorate in nursing tation, is professor and chair of / health care nursing at the rsity of California at San Fran- For eight years, she has com- l weekly between Minnesota alifornia, keeping her internal on Minnesota time.

nakes it easier," she says. "I get k very early and get a lot done anyone else gets there. And I



go to bed early in California."

Ida Marie has long had a compassionate concern for dying children and their families. While living in St. Paul, she organized a program to enable terminally ill children to die at home. The effort eventually grew into a block nurse program which has attracted national acclaim.

Currently, she's researching the impact of childhood cancer on families in China. She gathered data on 89 families in Guang Zhou (Canton) China in 1987 and will use a sabbatical this fall to analyze and interpret her findings.

"I see what I do as a mission," Ida Marie says, "and I couldn't do it without the centering of my faith."

"I think, in many ways, our middle generation of women has it best," she says. "We are free to grow, study and learn as long as we live. But we are spared the bewildering variety of choices that confront young people today. How do they choose?"

continued

Anna Martinson

Iguess maybe my growing up years were different," says Anna Martinson, Ida Marie's daughter. "I was in high school before I realized that not everybody has two parents who are Ph.D.s."

Anna was born in Hong Kong while Ida Marie and Paul were serving there as missionaries. She was a preschooler when they moved to Chicago for graduate studies. When Anna was in second grade, the family moved again to St. Paul.

She has returned to Hong Kong twice, during her junior year of high school and her junior year of college. But she doesn't really think of herself as "bi-cultural," she says.

When Anna entered St. Olaf College, she knew her parents wanted her "to study what I wanted to study. They always taught me that the meaning of life is more important than money." She graduated with a double major: in women's studies from the regular college and in Asian studies from the Paracollege, a St. Olaf program that emphasizes tutorials and allows students to design their own concentrations.

Now Anna is searching. Since graduation she has worked at the Midwest China Center and answered alarm calls for an electronic surveillance company. She is currently doing word processing at the University of Minnesota while applying for graduate school at Goddard College in Vermont. "I want to study feminist spirituality or counseling," she says. "I am so appalled by the level of violence in the world . . .



largely between people. Lying, honesty, language that's abusive, want to find images of strength in women.

"I appreciate the need for reformers, but that's not what I want to see," she continues. "I want to create a new, more peaceful society, to bring in new traditions, not critique old ones."

Relationships are important to Anna. She says, "My friends keep me going," and wonders how women will maintain those relationships in the future.

"I think there'll be more coming marriages in the future," she says. "My parents and other couples have shown that it can be done. How will we maintain continuing our other relationships? How will we keep the quality of our friendships when there's so much geographic distance between us?" ■

Inez M. Schwarzkopf is a former member with Women of the ELCA in the area of community and organizational development. Educated at Augsburg College, the University of Minnesota and Oslo, Norway, she now lives with her family in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The Vision for VISN

John Lynner Peterson

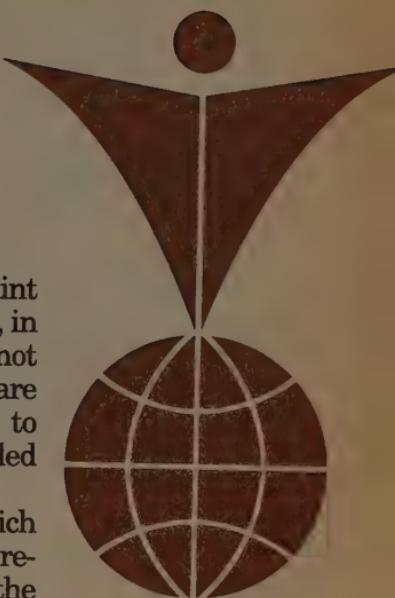
"There's nothing good to watch on TV!" This complaint is familiar to many North American households. And, in fact, the potential for good programming is often not realized. Programs that share our faith and values are seldom seen on television. Now there is an effort to change that situation: a new cable network called VISN—the Vision Interfaith Satellite Network.

VISN is a 24-hour cable television network which serves faith communities from a position of mutual respect for each other, as well as respect for the audience. This means there is no on-air fund-raising or commercializing. VISN encourages faith groups to be themselves, freed from the necessity of constant fund-raising appeals. VISN brings together 22 different faith groups in one faith and values network.

What's on VISN?

Programs range from worship services to documentaries, from comedies to call-in programs. Some of the programs come from such well-known sources as the British Broadcasting Company and the Canadian Broadcasting Company. VISN aired the first Mass from the Soviet Union—live from Vilnius, Lithuania! Denominational documentaries and faith stories reflect the special relationship the church has in our communities. Does your area cable company offer VISN? If not, you can help bring VISN to your community. The contracts with local cable companies make them accountable to serve the needs of their communities. Your input will be heard in interest—particularly if you join with other faith groups in your city to let the cable company know you want to watch and support VISN.

Currently the only program the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is able to provide regularly on VISN is the venerable "Davey and Goliath." Because of the impact of this program on an earlier generation across the country, the ELCA is exploring the possibility of pro-



*VISN is a
24-hour cable
television
network
which serves
faith
communities
from a
position of
mutual
respect.*



The ELCA brings "Davey and Goliath" to a new generation of viewers on VISN.

ducing new "Davey" episodes in a more contemporary format.

The ELCA has many other dreams for utilizing VISN. Through the talent of ELCA members, the church has the potential to provide programs featuring resources from ELCA congregations, colleges and seminaries and other institutions. Among its members the ELCA can count television writers, broadcasters and technical personnel. ELCA programming on VISN will grow as we tap the ideas and suggestions of these professionals. However, the development of quality programming takes money. Creative solutions to the immediate fiscal limitations faced by the ELCA will be needed before the dreams for VISN can become realities.

ELCA dreams for programming

A fast-paced news and feature format is planned to share the stories of ELCA members. This VISN program, currently called "Spectrum," needs story ideas, as well as edited features from local TV news people. (The process for submitting stories is similar to that used by major networks.) The ELCA has a grant to fund a pilot version of "Spectrum." A successful pilot could well attract additional funding.

Children and families are the target audience for "Story Barn," another ELCA proposal for VISN. The pilot production of "Story Barn" engages the audience with a variety of traditional and biblical stories. "Story Barn" will stimulate discussion among viewers and encourage them to share their own faith stories.

*The ELCA
has many
other
dreams for
utilizing
VISN.*

"Rhapsody," another program idea, will share our culture through Scripture and contemporary music. Films, art and music will provide a basis for interpreting the gospel message. "Rhapsody" will bring culturally diverse music from segments of our expanding heritage. This diversity will allow us to see ourselves with new eyes. "Rhapsody" could also be an effective evangelism tool, as those viewers who are introduced to the ELCA through this program would be encouraged to visit local congregations.

The tremendous success of Bill Moyers's programs on Public Broadcasting System (PBS) has shown that there is a hunger for conversations about theology and spirituality. "Table Talk" is a proposed ELCA program on VISN that would share the talent and reflections of best minds from the church's seminaries.

VISN also has time slots available for locally produced programs. These local opportunities are a chance to tell your story of ministry. In today's multimedia world, VISN challenges us to renew our commitment to use all the tools God has given us to share the most important story ever told!

Church development expert Lyle Schaller recently wrote in *The Parish Paper*, "As television continues to replace reading, this will . . . alter the approaches used to recruit new members as television becomes the most effective single approach for attracting new generations of church members."

You can help make VISN a reality in your community. Support materials are available from the ELCA's Commission for Communication to help organize an ecumenical community effort to get VISN on a cable channel in your area. Television professionals interested in contributing to "Spectrum" or other proposed programming are encouraged to contact the Commission for Communication, 8765 W. Higgins Rd., Chicago, IL 60631; (312) 383-3522. ■

L. Peterson is director for public media for the ELCA Commission for Communication. Previously he directed FCN, a local cable station in Rochester, New York. He also started "Lutherans of the Prairie," a TV ministry of the Western North Dakota District of the American Lutheran Church.

*ELCA
programming
on VISN
will grow as
we tap the
dreams,
ideas and
suggestions
of interested
members.*



Inside Stress

Paula Burtress, Mary Johnson, Keith Sehnert

Most North Americans know a lot about *outside* stress. Many have faced it and its adverse effects first-hand. The death of a spouse, divorce, personal injury or illness, and job loss are examples of major outside stress.

It is well documented that when one stressful situation is compounded with others, our bodies can become overloaded.

Now there is an impressive amount of research and clinical experience documenting *inside* stress as well. Like outside stressors, inside stressors—that is, the “wars” within—can also lead to a wide variety of health problems.

Inside stress has not been as easily understood or observed as the life-event stressors described earlier. However, it can make people just as sick. These inside stressors can be caused by food allergies and sensitivities, candida and yeast infections, viruses that lead to the Epstein-Barr syndrome and similar infections; toxic metals and chemicals from the

food we eat, the air we breathe and the water we drink; and/or deficiencies and deficiencies in the way we absorb, use or metabolize the vitamins and minerals in our diet.

The illnesses that result from much inside stress are a mysterious lot with names such as Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS), Candidated Complex (CRC), Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS) and Environmental Sensitivity Illness (ESI). They have been called the “alphabet soup bunch.” They puzzle clinicians, researchers and patients alike.

Unfortunately for the people afflicted with such problems, the illnesses are often written off as *stress reactions*. If you are a woman, illness may be labelled as “female problems” attributed to social changes in today’s world. Counseling may be advised. The people afflicted may say, “I know I’m *not crazy!* Something else is wrong. I don’t want a tranquilizer or antidepressant. Something isn’t working *inside*.”

As one patient commented recently, “Why am I sick when the doctor can find nothing wrong? Why Lord?”

Such questions are hard to answer. There are, however, several common factors worth noting which may have an effect on such illnesses:

- 1 Excessive use of antibiotics (in human and veterinary medicine);
- 2 Overuse of cortisone and related drugs—anti-inflammatory



Inside stressors

**—the “wars” within—
can lead to a
wide variety of
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Oral contraceptives that may
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able to allergic disorders.

roblems such as these from ex-
cessive or unnecessary medication
matically demonstrate the often
ow line between helping and
hing. And prolonged chemical
se (of alcohol, drugs, marijuana,
tine, caffeine) and unhealthy
-styles (too little exercise, too
h food, workplaces that are "sick
dings") all compound the prob-

side stress soon damages the
nue system. When this hap-
s, a person's body becomes more
erable to everyday viral, bacte-
and fungal overgrowth. Infec-
s develop. Illness moves in.

The illnesses it result from too ch inside stress a mysterious lot. ey have been led the "alphabet up bunch."

ose afflicted find that, in addition to their illness, there is social stress. Friends and family may feel that the victims are really sick. Sensitivity to odors, smoke and chemicals is common for the sufferer. When they request no smoking or no one in their presence, family and friends are sometimes puzzled by their behavior.

What resources are available? For



Jesus is interested in seeing that people are healed and made whole.

the more severely afflicted there is a Christian ministry based in Arcadia, California, titled *Share, Prayer and Care*. A nationwide support group called *HEAL* (Human Ecology Action League) has chapters in most states. In the Upper Midwest, there is a new group called A.T. L.A.S.T. (Acting Together Lay Associates Support Team) formed to help victims of fatigue and candida and to educate doctors and nurses about these conditions.

People bothered by such diseases—and their numbers are increasing—should be able to look to the church and church members for spiritual support. Fellow Christians need to learn about these modern maladies. Reading an article like this is a start. And those afflicted want others to know their suffering is real. Jesus is interested in seeing that people are healed and made whole ("I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly," he says in John 10:10). We who are Jesus' followers have the same interest. When sensitive understanding develops about these new *inside* stresses, healing can begin. ■

Paula Burtress is a wife and mother who has had a lifelong interest in health issues. Mary Johnson, Ph.D., is a nursing professor at St. Olaf College and has done extensive research on the subject of holistic health. Keith W. Sehnert, M.D., P.A., is a practicing physician and the author of books on selfcare.

Returning to the Earth

Mary C. Turck

Growing up on a farm, I fell naturally into the rhythms of nature. Spring meant planting. Summer brought bent backs and sweating over rows of beans and peas and broccoli and flowers. Fall's harvest was highlighted by the excited final rush to get tomatoes and melons and squash into the basement on the eve of the first killer frost. Winter's quieter, colder rhythm left more time for hibernating in the house, though the chores that came with caring for outdoor animals never stopped.

This rhythm is reflected in the life of a single tomato plant: from a carefully tended seedling it grows into a bush burning bright with succulent fruit before the withered brown stems are plowed back into the ground, there to rot and nourish new life.

In the homes of my grandmothers and my mother, the kitchen, too, followed this cycle of life. All "garbage" was separated into glass, cans, burnables and food scraps. Some food scraps were recyclable as food for the

dogs and cats and pigs. But potato and carrot peelings, egg shells, coffee grounds, and the like were collected in a pail beneath the sink. They ended up in a pile in the woods in summer, or spread over the garden in the winter. In either case, they turned to nourish the earth from which they had come.

Composting is the new name for this old practice of returning vegetable life to the earth. With limited city-dwelling space, new techniques abound. One woman collects grass and vegetable scraps in large garbage cans, with holes punched in them for air and drainage. Another has perfected a technique that requires only a handful of worms in a two-foot square box in her basement. Both women's gardens flourish with rich compost fertilizer.

My mother and grandmother could not choose today's standard easy way out—paying someone to make garbage disappear. They knew they were responsible for wastes their households generated. Faced with overflowing landfills and a national waste management crisis, it is time for us to remember and reclaim this part of our heritage. ■

Composting
is the new name for
the old practice of
returning vegetable life to
the earth.

Mary Turck, of St. Paul, Minnesota, grew up on a farm in central Minnesota. She is a writer and editor focusing on environmental and social justice issues.

Composting Made Simple

Composting is a process that allows the bacteria in soil to break down organic molecules. You can do composting right in your own yard by preparing a compost pile. Select an unused part of your yard, turn over the sod in the area and build a container. You can build a container to hold the compost material for around \$15 or buy one for \$35 to \$100.

Composting works best when small pieces are added to the pile. Grass clippings (avoid herbicides and pesticides) can go in as is. Collect bush and tree trimmings next to your compost. Shred them with your lawn mower or a commercial shredder. From your kitchen add egg shells, coffee grounds, and fruit and vegetable trimmings. Don't add any meat, bones or items cooked in oil because composting is basically a vegetarian process. Use a coffee can or small covered garbage can (a diaper pail works well) to collect chopped kitchen waste.

Layer your compost starting with dry material (twigs and leaves), then moist material (grass clippings and kitchen waste) and finally soil. Add lime to help reduce the pH level of the mixture, and a compost starter or nitrogen fertilizer to help the bacterial action. Keep the pile moist but not wet. Turn it every 7 to 14 days to make sure the pile gets adequate oxygen. Your compost pile will work and remain sweet smelling if you turn it regularly, keep it damp and avoid compacting it.

Compost material can be added to your garden at several points: at the beginning of the season after rototilling, to give extra fertilizer to already growing plants, and at the end of the growing season to blanket the soil for the winter. Shrubs and trees also appreciate a nutrient-rich sprinkle of compost.

For more information, contact your state's department of conservation or university extension office. ■

*Jonathan Kalkwarf
Director for Finance and Administration,
Women of the ELCA*

Brief Prayers on News Items

Sonia C. Groenewold

Japanese visitors to Minnesota spur global interest

To raise global awareness, St. Timothy Lutheran Church and Calvary Lutheran Church in Willmar, Minnesota, jointly sponsored a visit from a Japanese pastor and his family. The congregations brought the Rev. Kazuhiko Ohta, his wife Atsuko and their three-year-old son Yuki to Willmar, where they participated in church activities and shared their own story. The Ohtas serve Sendai Lutheran Church, a congregation of the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Dear God, help us make connections with brothers and sisters everywhere.

Lutherans open high school in Poland this fall

The first Protestant high school in Poland will open in September in Bielsko-Biala. The establishment of schools outside the state system also is planned for Cracow and Warsaw. Nearly half of the approximately 80,000 Lutherans in Poland live in the area around Bielsko-Biala. The plan is supported by the Evangelical [Lutheran] Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland.

Poland is facing many changes, Lord. Let this school be a blessing to its people.

Lutherans provide hope for refugees

The Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service works with Lutheran social service agencies, congregations and community groups to assist refugees, asylum seekers, undocumented people and immigrants. In its 50-year ministry, the agency has helped more than 170,000 refugees.

Loving Lord, let us see you in people who come to our land looking for help and hope.

Number of languages with Scriptures increases

The total number of languages now have at least one book of the Bible has risen to 1,928, reported United Bible Societies in England. At least one book of the Bible was issued for the first time in 21 languages. "Nothing compares to the feeling I get when a person tells me: I never knew God spoke my language," said U.B.S. executive committee chair, Dr. John Erickson.

Thank you for your Word, Creator God. Let us not take it for granted.

Let the local, national and international news provide you with material to build a daily prayer list.

Sonia C. Groenewold is news editor of The Lutheran.

MISSION:

Community

Back in the Old Days

Dolores Yancey

Mammama, what was it like when you were a little girl, back in the old days?"

I'm sure that for my little granddaughter, who asked me the question, "the old days" are somewhere in prehistoric times. However, the question caused me to recall the when I was a child in a world of own-ups. That world consisted only of parents and siblings, but grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins. It was within this larger family that we learned to love, rely on, and support one another as family members.

er question also reminded me of broader circle of neighbors, church members, family friends, teachers and pastors that formed the community in which I lived and which directly influenced my attitudes and behaviors. For most of us, this circle of love was a safe, natural environment where contemporary values like "independence," "privacy" and "freedom" were unheard of in a social context. There was little need for support groups, or intergenerational programs, because these were self-contained within the nuclear, extended and church families. These are the times I remember as "good old days."

The decline in nuclear families as we have known them, the demanding pace of modern life-styles and the struggle to be Christians in a secular world have created a real challenge for women. We cannot recreate the past as a norm for our contemporary society; but as Christian women, we still are called to nurture the one family that embraces us all—the family of God. The need for nurture from childhood through old age is as strong as ever, but it is more difficult to provide. Children still need to feel loved and to learn respect; adolescents still need to feel affirmed and to learn discipline; those in mid-life struggles need resources and encouragement; those in retirement and the golden years need appreciation, care and comfort. And we all need one another, loving and living together in this Christian family with God as our Father. ■

Dolores Yancey
Director for
Community and
Organizational
Development



MISSION:

Action

Positive Reading

The April 1990 LWT suggested moving beyond the blame and negativism that often surround the issue of *illiteracy* to examine those positive things that can be done to encourage *literacy*.

To do so does not mean ignoring the magnitude of the problem or the need. There is little danger of that, for we are constantly being reminded of the millions of people who are illiterate or functionally illiterate in this country. We are told of *their* problems and shame; the burden *they* are on the welfare system. We are often led to the conclusion that it is the low-level reader who is responsible for the crisis in education and workplace, and the decline in America's economic power in the world. Illiterate people often become the scapegoats for whatever ails America.

In contrast, to focus on the positive means to take all these facts and statistics and to move from *analysis* into *action*. What are some of the positive action choices we have?

◆ **We can encourage** and enable parents to be their children's first, best, and most loving teacher. Ask yourself if our society is encouraging, or subtly discouraging, such an action. Ask yourself what your church is doing to encourage successful parenting. (See "Two R's," page 9.)

◆ **We can focus** on the many ways that people learn and the various styles of learning. We can support efforts to use multiple approaches when teaching, and we can be aware of differing learning styles as we develop presentations and programs.

◆ **We can encourage** and support teachers.

◆ **We can cultivate an interest** in what goes on in schools, volunteer school committee work, run for school board, or encourage a local adopt-a-school program.

◆ **We can serve** as a tutor, a positive way to discover the person behind a statistic. A one-on-one opportunity to share the joys and struggles of an improving reader is, after the best cure for negativism.

Let us move forward to help create a literate society. ■

Faith Fretheim
Director for
Literacy



MISSION:

Growth

Gifted to Love: A Perspective on Mentoring

The Women of the ELCA Gifted Series offers a new program, "Gifted to Love: A Perspective Mentoring," which examines and encourages interpersonal relationships through the process of *mentor-*

This program resource is a one-wo-day retreat that includes case studies, hymns, Bible study, and other activities designed to affirm and encourage effective mentoring.

Mentoring can take place between minds, between the young and old, between children and parents, between members of congregations, between co-workers. The gift of mentoring relationship is one of *in-*
ment rather than advice; it is an active process that requires commitment and becomes a gift to both giver and receiver.

The following brief excerpt, from program section "Contemporary Issues and Discussion," reflects one of the many forms of mentoring that occur between the young and old—in this case, within families.

Maria's grandmother taught Maria many things. Together they would plant seeds and grow a variety of beautiful flowers. She told stories about her childhood and gave Maria hugs and memories. It was through her that Maria learned of God. She always spoke of God as if God walked beside her in all the moments of her life.

"Maria learned that God is with her even in difficult times. Grandmother told powerful stories of leaving the poverty of Mexico and working like a slave to survive and feed her family in the United States. There were times when she thought she would not have the strength to go on; times when she and her children went to bed hungry. But God lifted them through the despair and hunger. God always provided, and she learned always to trust and to be thankful. This faith was a precious legacy handed down to Maria by her grandmother."

Maria's story ends with discussion questions for group interaction. General leader helps for this retreat program are also included. ■

This program is available through Augsburg Fortress locations for \$1.50 (code number 2-9051).

Crysta Wille
Mission: Growth



A Thankoffering Service

Gwen Carr

Reader: Reads Jeremiah 1:4-8.

Hymn: *I Was There to Hear Your Burning Cry* (see pages 46-47).

Reader: Creator God, you have always been there for us. It was your hand that gently fashioned us in our mother's womb. Each one of us is made the same, each one of us unique. You were there to hear our burning cry, to welcome us into your world. For this we give you praise and thanksgiving.

Reader: Reads Psalm 100.

Reader: It was you who hovered over us as we grew. Through childhood you nurtured us. When we reached those uncertain teenage years you were there.

All: O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures for ever! (1 Chronicles 16:34).

Reader: As we grew into adulthood we did not grow out of questions. Marriage? Career? Children? Now? Later? So many choices to make. What is your will, O Lord?

All: Have no anxiety about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus (*Philippians 4:6-7*).

Reader: Through the years we continue to encounter choices and major decisions. We continue to mature as people of God and we discover that a life journey includes a faith journey. We begin to learn what you have known all along: the Christian life is full of many paths, directions, rhythms, cycles, seasons.

Reader: Reads Ecclesiastes 3:1-11.

Preacher: Reflection on Ecclesiastes 3:1-11 may be given.

Leader: Let us now bring our gifts of thanks and praise to God, who blesses us no matter where we are.

The Offering: "Now Thank We All Our God," Lutheran Book of Worship 533 may be sung during the offering. (Or "Search Me, O God" from the Women of the ELCA Worship Resource Book, pp. 54-55.)

Reader: Lord, you accompany us through the rhythms of our lives as we move from the womb to the tomb: through happiness and sadness, joy and pain, anger and reconciliation. We offer you our gifts of thanks.

and give you thanks for your many blessings. We remember your most precious gift to us, Jesus Christ, our Lord. In turn, we present ourselves now as a living sacrifice; we open our hearts and our lives to you.

Thanks be to God.

ader: Let us now pray for all the people of God, according to their needs.

Dear Lord, You have always been and will always be. No matter where we are in our life journeys, and in our faith journeys, you are there for us. Help us remember this when we feel far from you. Help us remember that you know us better than we know ourselves. Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

ader: Creator God, you know our strengths and weaknesses, our gifts and frailties. You know where we have been and where we are going. You know of our struggles to do your will. Renew us each day, so that our lives reflect our trust in you. Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

ader: We give you praise and thanksgiving for all your gifts—those we recognize and those you are still developing in each of us. Help us use our gifts for your glory, to do your will. Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

ader: As we watch the newfound freedom of our sisters and brothers in Eastern Europe, Central America and Africa, we rejoice with you in their liberation. Thank you, Lord, for your constant presence with them. Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

ader: Open our eyes and hearts to see you in the faces of others, especially the poor and oppressed. Give us the courage to strive for justice and liberation for all people. Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

ader: You have made us all the same, yet unique. Help us to value the diversity of gifts in your people. Lord, in your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

ader: We ask you to continue to lead us and watch over us. Help us glorify you in all that we do. We praise you today and always.
Amen.

Sing Hymn: "Take My Life, that I May Be" (LBW 406)

en Carr is a member of Our Savior's Lutheran Church in Salem, Oregon, and on the Women of the ELCA churchwide executive board, and in July elected president of Women of the ELCA.

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I Was There to Hear Your Borning Cry

John Ylvisaker

John Y

D7 G D G D G D

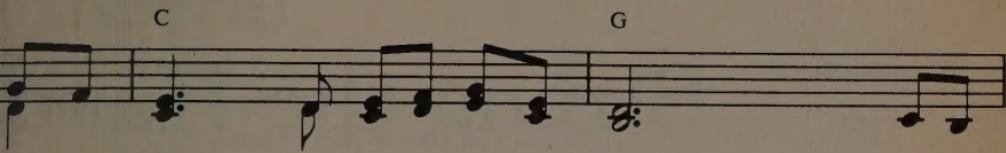
1. I was there to hear your born - ing cry,
3. When you heard the won - der of the word I'll
5. In the mid - dle a - ges of your life,
7. I was there to hear your born - ing cry,
I'll
I
not

G D G D G D

there when you are old. I re - joiced the day
there to cheer you on; you were raised to praise
old, no long - er young, I'll be there to guide
there when you are old. I re - joiced the day

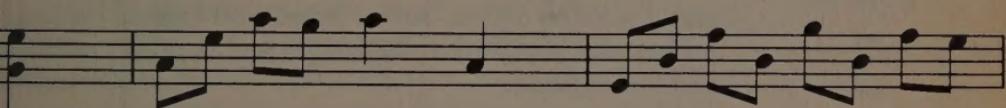
G D G C D7 G

were bap - tized, to see your life un - fold.
liv - ing Lord, to whom you now be - long.
through the night, com - plete what I've be - gun.
were bap - tized, to see your life un - fold.



I was there when you were but a child,
If you find some-one to share your time
When the eve - ning gent-ly clos - es in

with a
and you
and you



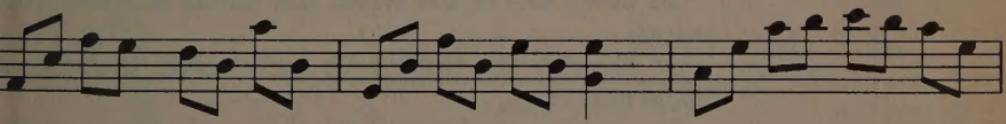
A7

D

G

C

faith to suit you well; in a blaze of light you
join your hearts as one, I'll be there to make your
hut your wea - ry eyes, I'll be there as I have



G

A7

D

wan - dered off to find where de - mons dwell.
ers - es rhyme from dusk till ris - ing sun.
al - ways been with just one more sur - prise.



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on.

Strong the Hands

Kathleen O'Keefe Reed

Strong the hands of Anna Paulson. Hands that milked cows and midwifed calves, baked bread and bathed babies.

Graceful, too, the hands that played Sunday preludes and painted sunsets.

All this and more were the hands of Anna Paulson until arthritis took its toll, making her hands cramp up like the claws of some wild bird of prey.

Holding on to the aluminum walker, moving it by fits and starts across the carpet from bed to chair seemed all that was left for her hands to do.

But the hands of Anna Paulson were not dead yet. At age 92, on any day of the week, you could find them breaking chains, snapping rope, building bridges, turning the key to the prison door.

On every day of the week, the hands of Anna Paulson prayed.

On Sunday she prayed for her church, that the doors would stay open.

On Monday she prayed for the earth, for peace in Middle East, and for the dairy farmers in Montpelier.

On Tuesday she prayed for her town, for the schools, for the factory that just laid off another hundred people.

On Wednesday she prayed for the sick, especially for the boy next door who came home drunk again last night.

On Thursday she prayed for the hungry, especially the children.

On Friday she prayed for the homeless, especially the children.

And on Saturday she prayed for the victims of abuse and violence, especially the children.

No pair of human hands could have been more powerful than those of Anna Paulson because when she prayed, the hands of Anna Paulson belonged to God, and the might of God's right arm belonged to her.

Strong the hands of Anna Paulson. ■

The Rev. Kathleen Reed is pastor of St. Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church in Proctor, Vermont. She and her husband, the Rev. Stephen Reed, have three children.

Nursing Home Cathedral

Small 40-bed nursing home,
ten or twelve elderly residents
gathered to celebrate the God who
has sustained them these many years.
The pastor made preparations for the communion service,
a pianist played beloved hymns
once sung when voices were strong,
bodies agile.
Somewhere within the group,
one who is blind began singing.
As memory tugged for words and melody,
confidence grew into a sure testimony of song.
Joined in celebrating the presence of God,
relishing the Word,
singing, praying,
gratefully receiving bread and wine.
Amidst cathedral walls,
but surely God was there; still the Sustainer. ■

Fran McLeod
Centuria, Wisconsin

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For everything there is a season, and a time
for every matter under heaven: a time to be
born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and
a time to pluck up what is planted; a time to kill, and a
time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;
a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and
a time to dance; a time to throw away stones, and a time to re-
gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to re-
frain from embracing; a time to seek, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to throw away; a time to tear, and
a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
a time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time
for peace. Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

See the Thankoffering Service on pages 44-47.

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